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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Christopher Eckman et al.      Art Unit : 1646  
Serial No. : 09/824,924      Examiner : O. Chernyshev  
Filed : April 3, 2001  
Title : ENDOTHELIN CONVERTING ENZYMES AND THE AMYLOID BETA  
PEPTIDE

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examination, please amend the application as follows:

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-6, 10, and 16-39 without prejudice to further prosecution.

Please amend claim 7 and add new claims 40-48 as indicated below.

A full set of pending claims is shown below for convenience.

7. (Amended) A method of identifying a compound that increases the activity of an ECE polypeptide, the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE polypeptide in the presence of said compound; and  
detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ ,

wherein a decrease in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound increases the activity of an ECE polypeptide.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said ECE and said A $\beta$  are in a cell.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY FIRST CLASS MAIL

I hereby certify under 37 CFR §1.8(a) that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage on the date indicated below and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

April 12, 2002

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